



University of Virginia Distinguished Alumna Lecture
Wednesday, April 21, 2004
Charlottesville, Virginia

Thank you very much for this honor. I am humbled to join such a distinguished group of alumni who have received this award. I see doctors, a rear admiral – even Katie Couric on the list.

I have very fond memories of my time at the University of Virginia. I came here as a Truman Scholar and found not only a world-class education in the law but a great environment in which to learn. It is always great fun to come back to campus to reminisce and take in the beauty of the campus and the community that surrounds it.

As you may know, not long after I graduate from law school here at UVa, I headed for Phoenix. I was accepted to be an associate with the firm of Lewis and Roca, under the mentorship of the late, great John P. Frank. John had a long and storied career as one of America's great lawyers, and he is perhaps best known for successfully representing Ernesto Miranda in the landmark *Miranda v. Arizona* case, which established the requirement for law enforcement authorities to read people their legal rights upon arrest.

When I went to Arizona, I could not have known what a land of opportunity this would turn out for me, as lawyer and ultimately as a leader of people. Arizona has a well-earned reputation of being a place where politicians are as tough as beef jerky and as reliably conservative as any state in the Union.

Much of that reputation is well-earned, to be sure. But for all of its rock-ribbed conservative bonafides, Arizona has chosen more women to lead it than any other state in America.

It's not often that Arizona can be considered one of America's more progressive states, but it certainly has a long and proud history of selecting women to serve among its leaders.

- Women have served in the Arizona Legislature since statehood. In fact the longest serving legislator in state history was a state representative named Polly Rosenbaum.
- Arizona sent one of America's first women to serve in Congress for three terms, when we elected Isabella Greenway to represent our at-large district throughout most of the 1930s.
- Arizonans elected Lorna Lockwood to the Arizona Supreme Court in 1960. She went on to become America's first woman to serve as a state supreme court chief justice.



- When state Senator Sandra Day O'Connor became the Arizona Senate Majority Leader in 1974, she was the first in America to do so. She, of course, went on to become the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.
- When Margaret T. Hance took office as mayor of Phoenix in 1976, she became the first woman to lead a major American city.

I am fortunate to be part of a long and proud history of women leaders in Arizona. In 1998 I was elected Attorney General as one of the "Fab Five" women who were elected to all five top constitutional offices. Four years later I became not the first, nor the second, but the third woman to serve as Arizona governor. Arizona is the only state to have three women Governors, and the only state to elect women back-to-back to this office.

So it turns out that as a young woman out of UVa law school, I could not have picked a better state than Arizona to start work and be a public servant.

I want to talk today about women as governors – partly because I can speak from personal experience, and partly because of the disproportionate impact women governors are having on American culture.

The story of America's 25 women governors has two distinct chapters. Chapter One is the story women running in place of their husbands.

Chapter Two is the story of women assuming office either because they which they succeeded governors who did not complete their terms, or they simply were elected governor in their own right.

The first chapter began in 1924, when Nellie Tayloe Ross was elected Governor of Wyoming and Ma Ferguson was elected Governor of Texas. Both were elected as proxies to their husbands elected on the promise to follow their husbands' agendas, which is how American women typically came to power for most of the 20th Century.

Not until the 1970s would a woman be elected governor in her own right. The 1980s and 1990s saw a steady up-tick in the number of women serving as their states' chief executives.

Today, women are the governors of eight states – Arizona, Delaware, Hawaii, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Montana, and Utah. All of them have taken office since 2001, and they represent one third of all women who have ever served as a governor. Clearly, voters are becoming increasingly more comfortable with electing women to lead their states.

This is incredibly important to the future of America. Here's why:



Until women are routinely chosen to lead states, a woman will never be asked to lead this nation. “Leadership” has a decidedly masculine tone to it, because our leaders have been almost exclusively men – leaders in government, business and even the traditional family unit.

Think of America’s great leaders and those who leap immediately to mind are featured on Mt. Rushmore or the money in our wallets. And they are known for their leadership during times of war.

- Washington won the War of Independence.
- Lincoln won the Civil War and preserved the Union.
- Franklin Roosevelt won WWII.
- JFK stared down the Soviets to win the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Leadership has been defined by men conquering adversity during wartime. And yet there are no clear heroes known for conquering those complex social issues that defy black-and-white answers.

Who will fix America’s education system, the feeder system to the knowledge-based economy of this century? Who will tackle the spiraling cost of healthcare in America, especially for senior citizens? Who will vanquish poverty at its roots?

Women have the best shot at making the most progress in these areas, and more of them are serving as governors. Along the way, they are changing our definition of leadership because they are bringing gender balance to governors offices.

In her book *Closing the Leadership Gap*, Marie Wilson makes the case that men and women have fundamentally different styles of leadership, shaped by their upbringing and acculturation.

Men in politics are typically conditioned to lead as unilateralists, making definitive decisions on immediate problems.

They wage war and stop crime. Women, who are conditioned to be society’s care givers, are more apt to lead as collaborators and communicators, focusing on long-term solutions to wider problems. They forge consensus solutions.

Nowhere are these leadership styles more greatly tested than in executive leadership roles. People’s ideas of political leadership do not come from members of the legislative or judicial bodies. Leadership is defined by executive leaders – mayors, governors and presidents.



Women in state legislatures and Congress are certainly feminizing leadership in their own right. U.S. House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and the many powerful women who serve in the United States Senate are slowly bringing gender balance to Congress.

But in a legislative body, members have a certain degree of latitude to choose the issues they tackle. They have the luxury of requesting on which committees to serve, which issues to champion, and which debates to join.

When you're governor, the issues choose you. And therein lie the tests of leadership that shape the public's perception of its leaders.

When I took office, I planned to reform Arizona's education system and state government's budget management. I prepared to modernize our economic base and bring prescription drug price relief to our senior citizens.

I didn't choose to be an expert on wildfires in western forests. But in my first year in office, wildfires destroyed nearly 200,000 acres of forest in Arizona.

I didn't choose to be America's most knowledgeable governor on petroleum pipelines. But when a gas pipeline burst last August and caused a week-long gas shortage in Phoenix, I was forced to become an instant expert on how to get more gas to the pumps.

And I never expected to know so much about hostage negotiations. But in January, prison inmates took two correctional offices hostage in a western Arizona prison, and I found myself mired in the longest prison hostage situation in American history.

Before I leave office, it is likely that I will have to call out National Guard troops to respond to a state emergency. I may have to sign a death warrant for an execution. I'll name at least one more state Supreme Court justice – I've already appointed one. And I'll negotiate billions upon billions of dollars in state budgets to come.

Along the way, I believe I'll be offering the Arizona public a balanced view of leadership at the highest level.

Marie Wilson, who founded the White House Project to elect a woman president, insists in her book that America does not need women to replace men in leadership, but rather to lead alongside them, so these two very useful styles of leadership can operate in tandem, complementing one another.

That paradigm is playing out in Arizona right now, in very stark terms. Both the President of the Arizona Senate and the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives are men from rural communities, currently struggling to get a budget passed for next fiscal year.



Their bottom line for balancing our budget deficits is to make whatever cuts must be made regardless of the human toll that may come. My bottom line is to do whatever it takes to balance the budget without cutting our investments in education, indigent healthcare and other services that help low income families regain their independence.

We are adjusting to each other's leadership styles. That said, the budget I signed into law for this year accomplished all of my goals.

Beyond the budget top priorities for my first year in office were bringing systemic improvements to Arizona's antiquated tax code, its failing schools, its completely dysfunctional division of Child Protective Services, its wasteful budget management systems, its ailing forests and its endangered water supply.

For these and other complex problems, my weapon of choice is the task force. I have found that the best recommendations for broad reform come from groups of experts empowered to give deep focus on one topic. It has the added benefit of bringing in people from outside government to take part in problem-solving who might not otherwise have the opportunity to serve.

Literally hundreds of people have served on various volunteer task forces, commissions and councils that I have created, and they have provided me with insightful recommendations, derived from a rich diversity of views and perspectives.

It also allows me to tackle more challenges at once, giving Arizonans better performance from their government. And it plays to my ambitious nature.

I say that I am ambitious to make a point. Tradition tells us that we are not supposed to describe ourselves as such, because ambitions lie among leaders, and leaders we're used to seeing are men. Ambition among women has been frowned upon as somehow unfeminine. That, of course, is silly.

I have set state government on a course of rapid reforms in many directions, because I want to accomplish as many reforms as possible in my limited time in office. I am quite comfortable proclaiming that I am an ambitious governor. Because Arizona is better off for my pursuit of those ambitions. And the public's acceptance of feminine ambition will grow as more women take pride in their ambitions, rather than trying to minimize them.

Our style of leadership is neither better nor worse than men's style of governing, just perhaps more relevant for modern times. And given the chance to bring balance to the styles of leadership that determine the outcome of government work, the presence of women on all levels – but especially at the top – holds promise.

It holds the promise of turning the corner on many political challenges that have defied resolution in the all-male political world of the 20th Century.



So, as I keep plugging away as Arizona's Governor, my hope is for more women – many more women – to follow behind me and the other women who are serving as America's governors, mayors and other executive leaders. Women, after all, are in the majority of the population and the electorate. We must help to run the world if we are to secure our equal stake in everything it has to offer.

Thank you for the honor you have given me today.